**Literature Circle Roles**

**Researcher**

**Name Maria Benitez Circle 5**

**Meeting Date December 2019 Reading Assignment Chapter 16-23**

**Book The Illegal by Lawrence Hill**

**Researcher:** Your job is to dig up some background information on any relevant topic related to your book. This might include

* The geography, weather, culture, or history of the book’s setting
* Pertinent information about the author and other related works
* Information about the time period portrayed in the book
* Information on any topics or events represented in the book
* Information on any topics or events that may have influenced the author
* Pictures, objects, or materials that illustrate elements of the book
* The history and derivation of words or names used in the book
* Information about any character that is based on a historical person

RESEARCH NOTES:

* **Meaning**: Blessing. The **name Keita** means Blessing and is of African **origin**. **Keita** is **name** that's been used by parents who are considering unisex or non-gendered baby **names**--baby **names** that can be used for any gender. æ µå¤ª also a Japanese **name** (blessing+big -- a great mercy, a huge blessing, this child was a gift)
* Lawrence Hill is the son of American immigrants — a black father and a white mother — who came to Canada the day after they married in 1953 in Washington, D.C. Growing up in the predominantly white suburb of Don Mills, Ontario in the sixties, Hill was greatly influenced by his parents’ work in the human rights movement. Much of Hill’s writing touches on issues of identity and belonging.
* Hill is the author of ten books including the novels [*The Book of Negroes*](https://www.lawrencehill.com/the-book-of-negroes)and[*The Illegal*](https://www.lawrencehill.com/the-illegal),and the non-fiction books [*Blood: the Stuff of Life*](https://www.lawrencehill.com/blood-the-stuff-of-life), and [*Dear Sir, I intend to Burn your Book: An Anatomy of a Book Burning*](https://www.lawrencehill.com/dear-sir-i-intend-to-burn-your-book). Hill is a winner of the Rogers Writers’ Trust Fiction Prize, the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize for Best Book, and both CBC Radio’s Canada Reads and Radio-Canada’s Combat des livres.
* Hill draws important distinctions between Zantoroland and Freedom State. Freedom State, as a nation, is an unsatisfactory and incompletely realized compromise, but there is nevertheless hope in its democratic institutions; Zantoroland, a dictatorship, is a nightmare, where state-sanctioned torture and killings eliminate dissent. Wealth separates these nations, too. Freedom State's thriving economy is interdependent on the freedom of movement, freedom of the press, an independent police force and the rule of law. Yet its rise to prosperity is due to unacknowledged history, its economy built on the enslaved labour of those whose descendants are now excluded or marginalized – and blamed for their own exclusion.
* Boatloads of refugees are attempting the dangerous crossing of the Ortiz Sea between Zantoroland and Freedom State. Their hoped-for destination is the shantytown of AfricTown where both legal and illegal residents live in shipping containers rented to them by Lulu, the de facto ruler of AfricTown. The idea of social and racial mobility is key to the success of the larger project of Freedom State, but in reality only a token few escape AfricTown, where, amidst the squalor, an illegal economy thrives. Lulu is a nebulous moral figure, both benevolent and ruthless: her relationships are transparently transactional. She uses every advantage at her disposal. But who doesn't? What is the difference between a good person and a bad person? Lulu straddles a line in between. There are bad people in this book: parasitic schemers, power-seekers, a dictator, torturers, purveyors of violence and fear. Some of these people are the ones who craft partisan, discriminatory laws. And some who break these laws are good people, journalists who subvert the rules in order to expose the truth, an elderly woman who gives library cards to "illegals," and Keita himself, hiding in a foreign state.

This is *not* a formal research report. The idea is to find some information or material that helps your group understand the book better. Investigate something that really interests you – something that struck you as puzzling or curious while you were reading.

**Ways of gathering information:**

* + The introduction, preface, or “about the author” section of the book
	+ Library books and magazines
	+ On-line computer search or encyclopedia
	+ Interviews with people who know the topic
	+ Other novels, nonfiction, or textbooks you’ve read